No. 8

amenorrhoea

James

Robt. E. Boulden

admitted March 24. 1819

By
which
not b
ing)
northe
health
By
is m
from
Th
Phys
discr
By
other
Va
und
Ar

Amenorrhoea

Before entering into a disquisition of the subject which is the object of the following pages it may not be amiss to make some observations respecting Menstruation in its healthy state, Amenorrhoea being only a departure from the healthy condition of the Menses.

By Menstruation or a flow of the Catamenia is meant a periodical discharge of a fluid from the Uterus resembling arterial blood.

There has been much discussion amongst Physiologists relative to the nature of this discharge, its origin et cetera.

By some it is contended to be arterial, by others venous.

Vesalius for instance said it was Venous, and Ruysch on the contrary that it was Arterial.

I am a
and in
general
„ut d
It has
„ther th
or the ene

er cit of
In proof
to mens
have no
But a
same u
same a
during
This
not ea
„unteer
Dur

I am disposed to adopt the latter of these opinions, and indeed I believe it to be the opinion most generally entertained on this subject at the pre-sent day.

It has also been a point much controverted whe-ther this discharge proceeded from the Vagina, or Uterus.

Doctor Hunter it appears deserves the credit of having discovered its real origin the Uterus. In proof of its originality in Utero, women cease to menstruate during pregnancy, which would have no effect on it, if it came from the Vagina

But on the other hand it has been urged that some women do menstruate during pregnancy: some only in the early months; but others during the whole period.

This at first sight might appear a difficulty not easily gotten over. It may however be acc-counted for in this way.

During the first months of pregnancy

only a
the Fo
a creeto
when t
by the
that a
covered
this du
The f
le mer
It cer
was it
a poin

the fir
fact, a
He st
"Mend
taken
it that

only a small portion of the Uterus is occupyed by the Foetus, of course there is still a considerable secreting surface, and in the latter months when the Uterus is more completly occupyed by the Foetus, may we not reasonably suppose that a small portion of the Vagina may be covered by a secreting membrane from which this discharge may still proceed?

The fluid discharged was long thought to be mere blood differing only in viscidity. It certainly is not a hamorrhage, for if it was it would coagulate, and that it does not is a point conceeded I beleive by all.

The celebrated John Hunter was perhaps the first who took notice publicly of this fact, at least in Great Britain.

He observes, that "the blood discharged in "Menstruation, is neither similar to blood "taken from a vein of the same person, nor "to that extravasated by an accident in any

"other part
changed
commun
of the bl
by which
living) p
The blood
of coag
ning), s
I have n
The
its appe
as the c
In Lapl
women a
months
ers of
to sixte
mighta
In

"other part of the body; but is a species of blood
"changed, seperated, or thrown off from the
"common mass, by an action of the vessels
"of the Uterus, in a process similar to secretion;
"by which action the blood having lost its
"living principle, it does not so easily coagulate."
The blood tho may be deprived of this power
of coagulation by several causes, as by light-
"ning, some kinds of small pox &c. But of this
I have no certain knowledge.

The time at which this discharge makes
its appearance may be varied by several causes,
as the climate, state of the health et cetera.
In Lapland for instance, according to Linnaeus
women only menstruate during the summer
months. In our own climate the commencem
"ent of menstruation is usually from fourteen
to sixteen years of age; tho occasionally it
may take place a little earlier.

In very warm climates we have accounts of

girl men
is not an
become
Astoli
„pulled g
Hip
too large
more use
of the

matter
almost
are dis
I have
then Z
„covered
Thodiser
to seven
and in
were mor

girls menstruating at eight, and in those it is not an uncommon thing for a woman to become a mother at nine or ten yrs of age.

As to the quantity discharged, it may be computed generally at from iv to ℥vj.

Hippocrates says ℥xx tho this is certainly too large a quantity, and should be considered more as an hemorrhage than as a real discharge of the Catamenia.

It is indeed a difficult matter to ascertain the precise quantity, as most females from motives of delicacy are disposed to conceal it.

If however, as I have just observed more than ℥vi are discharged it should be considered as an hemorrhage.

This discharge usually continues from five to seven days, sometimes not more than three, and in some cases even nine or ten. If it were more rapid it would be attended with

very gre
female
unmed
When w
he des
changi
becom
ma in
to bear

The m
the
yet the
without
and l
ipure
one h
the ca
ruler.

very great inconvenience and the unhappy female would be liable to have her delicacy wounded by many unforseen accidents.
When women arrive at from forty five to fifty the discharge becomes irregular frequently ceasing for three or four months and then becoming excessive. This is an important era in their lives, for if there be a disposition to cancer &c. it now makes its appearance.

Notwithstanding as before mentioned the most common period of the cessation of the menses is from forty five to fifty, yet there are cases mentioned of women menstruating at sixty, seventy, and at eighty and there is a case related by Doctr. Dewees of one who had this discharge at the age of one hundred and six. Such cases tho. are to be considered as exceptions to a general rule.

Having now briefly spoken of the

nature of the Menstrual discharge, its term of continuance, with a few of the most common symptoms attending attending it, I shall proceed to a consideration of some of the theories that have been advanced relative to its causes et cetera.

It was anciently believed and is by some even at the present day supposed to be under lunar influence. But were this the case then all women should menstruate at the same time; whereas we know that this discharge takes place at any time of the month totally regardless of the moons phases. This however continued to be the belief till the time of Galen; he adopted the theory of plethora. He argued that women take generally as much aliment as men and much less exercise, consequently that it was necessary there should be some way of freeing the system of this sup

an abundance of blood necessarily generated, and that the uterus performed this office. But that it is not dependent on plethora may be easily proven, for if there be plethora in these cases it must be caused by five or six ounces of blood, and the loss of that quantity from any part of the system ought to be equally as effectual in relieving it. But this we know not to be the case; for if twenty, or thirty, or I might say forty ℥ are taken it does not interrupt the discharge. Women also occasionally have vicarious hamorrhages from other parts of the body, as the nose, lungs &c. without affecting menstruation in the slightest degree. Again, we find that women of weak and delicate constitutions menstruate as copiously as those of a plethoric habit.

These objections against general plethora as the cause convinced Dr. Dillen that it was erroneous, and he substituted local plethora.

He believed that the vessels of the Uterus became distended with blood and were consequently forced to discharge it. But Morgagni, who was an accurate observer and who attended particularly to this subject could not discover any distention. Tho we should be less rationally to suppose there must be some turgescence of the vessels, as this would be necessary, to supply the blood from which the Catamenial fluid is secreted.

The first objection to this theory is that it considers menstruation as a mere hamorrhage and farther it could only account for the first discharge. I would then ask what procures the second discharge?

Here Cullen acknowledges himself at a loss and was compelled to resort to the force of habit as an explanation. Thus tho is totally insufficient. The influence of habit could not be so soon established; nor could it be

suffic
age. a
man c
But
second
its, sau
seas, a
ginler
a bla
a mea
the force
in y na

This obse
the c
hacis
which c
nerial
ng o
A

sufficient to produce even the third discharge. This theory must therefore be looked upon as very deffective.

But supposing habit to produce the second and all succeeding discharges, its power is sometimes very much diminished, and occasionally totally destroyed by interruption. Would not pregnancy and suckling which put a stop to it for twenty two months be a period sufficient to break the force of habit? In my opinion it certainly would. This theory then we also discard.

Chemistry next offers its aid in this obscure and difficult subject. Here too it was totally defective. It attributes the discharge to a fermentation in the blood which was said to be produced by the venereal desire. This was too absurd to last long and of course was soon discarded.

It is thought some that certain emotions of the

mix ma
change.
the cas
the where
the
he relu
the the
yet he
his
receive
demo
are th
equivale
admit
have b
is a br
A memo
received
to the s

mind may have an effect in producing this discharge Doctor Clark of London mentions the case of a Lady who never had menstruated. There was in the system a disposition to this menstruation, when hearing suddenly of the return of her husband from a voyage, tho the discharge was not actually induced, yet he supposes from this intelligence this disposition farther increased, and she received, notwithstanding the catamenia did not make their appearance; in this case the Doctor thinks the disposition equivalent to the act itself. We readily admit that certain operations of the mind have a powerfull effect on the whol system. As a proof of which I will mention a case of a young Lady labouring under Amenorrhœa who (after all the usual remedies had proved abortive) was sent to the sea shore for the purpose of flow-

thing; a
me fro
the sign
where
After h
South
of off
usual c

timent
ment
ment
ecu
claim
unceas
we sha
withstan
this subj
than
free n
All th

"thing; and on lifting a rail to knock down some fruit, she was very much alarmed at the sight of a large snake which lay under it and immediately menstruated. After this she had her regular periods.

To these emotions then let us ascribe the effect and not to the propone of sexual enjoyment.

I might still proceed to mention some other theory that have been entertained relative to the nature, and causes, of this discharge; but as I make no claims to originality, should deem it an unnecessary consumption of time; therefore shall only farther remark, that not withstanding the diversity of opinion on the subject still most are agreed that without this discharge having taken place no woman can become pregnant. All therefore that can be said on the

subject
fibro-a
ligatures

inflamm
cases to
and which
intestines
irregular
bladder
opinion,
but it sh
Pity. Sie
brethren

time o
inflamm. i
and old a
diseases

subject is but little more than a statement of probabilities founded on conjecture and hypothesis.

Irregularities of the Menstrual discharge I believe to be the most common sources of those diseases to which females are particularly liable; and which for many reasons calls for the particular attention and skill of the practitioner. All irregularities of the Catamenia may be comprehended under the terms Retention, Suppression, excessive, deficient, and painfull menstruation. But I shall confine myself to the two first of these viz. Retention and Suppression both of which are comprehended under the term

Amenorrhoea

By which we are to understand a partial or total obstruction of the Menses in women arising from other causes than pregnancy, suckling and old age. Dr. Cullen in his classification of diseases places this genus in the class Locales,

and order
Menstr
ulation.
of the sun
radii of
other A
action of
move the
the
the secre
vidly sta
appearance
the occa
appear
the
what as ell
cau
not
the R.
certain

and order Epischeses.

Menstruation as I have before observed is a peculiar secretion of the Uterus and not blood: by this view of the subject we have an explanation of Modus operandi of Emenagogues; and of course we have to consider Amenorrhoea an interruption of the secretory action of the Uterus, and that the medicines which remove this, act so as to restore the healthy condition of the Uterus; on the precise condition of which the secretion depends. Notwithstanding I have previously stated that the Catamenia usually make their appearance between the age of fourteen and sixteen yet occasionally we have astonishing precocity; all the organs of a woman appearing to be developed at the age of twelve or thirteen. As this is not looked upon as disease so a retardation two or three years, provided every thing else be proper and regular, cannot be called disease.

The Uterus and ovaria must have arrived at certain state of perfection before this discharge

cant ta
cons i
When a
citizen
necessy, a
cises the
exercises
If now
it coun
tum it by
of acts
make use
receipt
Rhenish
balance
an agre
way cha
the Sey
If an
mens be

can take place, and in some it may require a few years longer than in others, to arrive at this state.

When a woman in this Country arrives at the age of eighteen without having menstruated she generally becomes uneasy, and often a Physician is consulted. If in such cases she is not in good general health we may prescribe exercise, particularly on horseback, with some tonic.

If however there be nothing the matter but retention it is unnecessary to resort to medicines: tho sometimes by way of complying with the solicitations of our patient, or her friends, we are compelled to make use of some remedy; in these cases a very good prescription is bread pills coloured with a little Rhubarb. By this means from the faith of the patient in her physician these pills may afford an agreeable stimulus to the mind, and in this way we gain time; nature effects the cure and the Physician gets the credit.

If on the contrary there be general disease it must be treated without any regard to the retention.

It cannot
L.E.C. c
Then a gen
relief
symptom
But
must first
system a
under cer
administra
of Iron o
relieve
of lime
of neurot
accompan
Maddo
particular
The dose i
day.

The

We cannot develop the Uterus therefore must wait till it is stimulated into action by the Ovaries. When a gentle stimulus is necessary in all cases of Aloetic medicines are very good. The Aloetic or compound Rhubarb pill should be freely employed.

But in this as in all other complaints we must first learn the exact condition of the system and apply them accordingly.

Under certain conditions of the system the administration of tonics, particularly the preparations of Iron prove beneficial, such as Chalybiate waters tincture of Muriated Iron, or the Carbonas ferri combined with Myrrh. When we discover symptoms of menstruation as pains in the back, extending down the thighs &c we may then assist.

Madder at this time is highly recommended particularly by Doctr. Jones of this City. The dose is from ʒß to ʒj twice or three times a day.

The tincture of Guaiac is also very good.

but is too stimulating to be used first. If there be activity in the pulse we always draw blood before its exhibition. We are also attend to the state of the bowels.

Besides this general ~~[illegible]~~ plan of treatment, it has been also proposed to excite more directly the uterine action by marriage, and the use of certain Emmenagogues. With respect to the latter part of the proposal, I am of opinion that if not judiciously employed they will do harm, and they do not generally succeed without the use of such measures as tend to improve the general system. If retention should be accompanied with a plethoric state, the last plan is to use purgatives regularly, in a degree proportioned to their effect on the system, and make the patient take as much exercise as she can without producing fatigue. If however we should not succeed in curing the disease by this general plan of treatment we must then resort to the use of certain articles

known by the name of Emenagogues. The first of which I shall mention is the Polygala Senega.

This under certain conditions of the system is to be relied upon as one of the best articles. The form in which it is usually exhibited is either the powder root, or in decoction; but the saturated decoction is generally preferred. If it excite nausea, which it is apt to do in a large quantity we then combine assafœtida with it, as some pool or cinnamon water. The usual dose is from three to six in the twenty four hours; but when the menstrual effort is at hand and until the discharge is induced we should urge it as far as possible without causing its rejection. In the interval we are advised to lay it aside for a week or two; without this precaution, if the medicine does not lose its effect it is apt to become exceedingly nauseous and disgusting to the patient. During its exhibition the system is to be kept well regulated. Respecting this article, I shall only further

remark that I suspect, it may be used in almost all forms of Amenorrhœa, if in prescribing it, a proper regard be had to the constitution & system.

The Savin is also an article which has been used with some advantage as an emenagogue. It was employed half a century ago by Dr. Home, but discouraged its use, and the confidence in the remedy was hence very much lessened; but it is lately revived and is used with much benefit in some weak forms of Amenorrhœa. The dose is ℞ or xv grs three or four times a day.

Madder as I before stated has been used as an emenagogue, and not without some benefit, but it has been accused of some injurious qualities and hence rejected it: but by other Authors it has been highly extolled, particularly by the late Doctr. Barton.

There are several other articles which are recommended as emenagogues, such as Cantharides, the common Rosemary, Phosphorus &c.

but in
the great
[illegible]
grave,
[illegible]
is some
means,
[illegible]
ng [illegible]
article,

As
to [illegible]
[illegible]
for to
but lep
Salinde

but in the exhibition of the latter of these articles the greatest caution is necessary, it being a most powerfull remedy. Even in the dose of grs. j a grain, it is said to produce a universal glow and excitement, and when properly regulated by some supposed to be a very important article; and as possessing a more direct tendency to the organs of generation than almost any other article of the Materia Medica.

Next I have only a few of those medicines suited to cases where extreme atony and debility exists; for frequently a more relaxation exists requiring for its cure a set of remedies more permanent but less violent in their action than the above: I allude to Tonics.

They are not properly Emmenagogues; being only so in asmuch as they restore the tone of the Uterus. The tonics most usually resorted to are some of the preperations of Iron; these are considered best, and their exhibition

should be accompanied by the use of the cold bath, exercise, friction, change of air, a generous diet, et cetera. As amongst the best and most common of the chalybeate preparations I shall mention the Limature ferri in the dose of from V to X grs and the Carbonas ferri in doses of from X to XX grs several times a day; the latter of these however being unpleasant in this form, is scarcely ever given so; but combined with Peruv. bark, ginger, or some aromatic. The following formula is recommended by Doctr Chapman as rendering it more agreeable

℞ Rust of Iron ʒii
Peruv. Bark ... ℥i
Powd. Ginger ʒii Syrup q.s. to make into an Electuary to be given pro re nata.

But there is still another mode of exhibiting it; in the form of Chalybeate wine. Agreeing also with the Drs prescription is the following

Ke

[illegible] wine,

[illegible] accen

It ist

[illegible] au. th

[illegible] ton, el

[illegible] tial

[illegible] un assi

[illegible] ical

[illegible] eu.

[illegible] Resa

[illegible] d. trea

[illegible] ise,

[illegible] tit

[illegible] ntum

[illegible] rimen

[illegible] ea

℞ Rust of Iron ℥ß.
" Gentian.... ℥ß
" Orange peel.. ℥ß put into a bottle of Sherry wine, expose to a moderate heat for two days and decant for use.

It is the practice with some to unite Tartar emetic with chalybiates; as Asafoetida, Musk, Castor, &c &c. My own conviction however is that there is little good to be derived from them as emmenagogues; tho' they may prove beneficial in relieving Hysteria connected with Amenorrhœa.

In addition to what I have said in my dissertatory and humable manner relative to the treatment necessary to this form of the disease; I shall only add that unless the bowels be kept well regulated, and a corresponding attention be paid to the Arterial system, all our remedies will at last, prove inefficient and unavailing). Before however dismissing

the subject entirely, I will merely make a few remarks on suppression of the Catamenia; but having anticipated much relative to the treatment of this form of the disease in my preceding remarks, the treatment necessary to both being very similar, it only remains that I make a few observations and I shall have done.

Suppression of the Menses may be produced by a variety of causes, such as violent agitations of the mind, cold applied to the surface of the body, or even cold substances taken into the stomach are said to produce the same effect. But when it is a consequence of some chronick and obstinate disease, such as Consumption, Dropsy, it would be both useless and hurtful to attempt by stimulating drugs to restore it. But in those cases where fear, or some removable cause, inducing debility of the frame, it is proper to interfere, both as the suppression is a source of anxiety to the patient, and also as the

natural means of restoration tend to amend the general system. It is proper in our curative plan to reflect that Suppression may take place under different circumstances of the constitution. It may occur with a debilitated, Chlorotic condition in which case we are to proceed much in the same way as in Retention; and along with the tonick plan of treatment, it will be proper to have recourse to the use of Emmenagogues, such as Savin, Hellebore, Marsh Madder &c.

About the time the Catamenia are expected to make their appearance we may derive great benefit from the exhibition of an Emetic, accompanied with the use of the warm bath, semicupium or pediluvium. But in Suppression, as in Retention we are to be governed very much by the state of the pulse. Should the pulse be strong we detract blood freely tho in some instances the pulse is rather weak to bear the evacuation, yet there is too much action to use

stimulants in such cases we may exhibit Madder in the dose of ℥j two or three times a day. If however this does not succeed and we wish something more stimulating we may then resort to the use of the Vol. Tinct of Guaiac. The following formula is highly recommended by Doctr Dewees

℞ Gum Guaiac ℥viii
Carbonate of Soda ℥iii
Allspice ..... ℥j
Sugar ℔ss ℔ij

To be given in the dose of ℥j twice or three times a day. This prescription the Dr says has never failed in his hands of effecting a cure in cases in which it was proper to use it.

The Black Hellebore as I have previously stated is considered a valuable article in the repression of the Catamenia, this appears to be a remedy of ancient date, and was for a while entirely laid aside as being less efficacious than some others; but its reputation has been lately

revived in this Country and in Europe: and in this City is by some of the oldest Physicians thought to be one of the best Emmenagogues: Dr. Physic is one of its most sanguine advocates: he says he scarcely ever commences the cure of Amenorrhoea without the use of the Black Hellebore. It is given either in the form of Tinct, or the powd. leaves. The dose of the powder is viii or x grs., of the Tinct. from XXV to XXX Gtts.

In addition to what I have said of the remedies best suited to the cure of Amenorrhoea their mode of exhibition, and the numerous circumstances necessary to be attended to in the treatment of this very distressing complaint, I shall only add two others: Blisters and a Salivation, the latter of which however is only resorted to in extreme in extreme cases; and by the Practitioner is considered a dernier ressource, or the Ultima ratio medicorum.

Having thus delivered my observations

relative
in as cau
limited
subject u
but to do
the sever
ority, wa
my feel

To
on all tro
them to
dangmen
ities of i
ade him

Wh
that you
one of a
Saw b

relative to the nature, and cure of Amenorrhoea, in as concise a manner as my time, and the limited experience which I have had on the subject would admit, I shall now close this Essay. but to do this without an acknowledgment to the several Medical Professors of this University, would be a breach of that duty which my feelings claim.

To you therefore Gentlemen; at least this small tribute of my esteem is due. Permit me then to present you with the sincere acknowledgments of a pupil, for the many opportunities of improvement your Lectures have afforded him.

With the assurance of my best wishes, that you may continue to enjoy all the pleasure of success in the Science of Medicine, I now bid you,

Adieu.